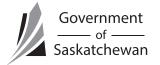# Artists in Communities Artists in Schools:

Review Process and Recommendations

fall/winter 2017-18

INTRODUCTION

At its simplest level, public arts funding in Canada originally hoped to serve two primary purposes: the development of a unique Canadian body of artistic work and the provision of opportunities for all Canadians to have access to quality arts experiences. Over the first 50 years of public arts funding, a great deal of emphasis was placed on that first aim – the development of a unique Canadian voice. While funders will always need to continue to support this type of activity, public funding has succeeded in growing Canadian artists and arts organizations whose work is recognized both at home and internationally. Over the past 15 years, funding bodies have begun placing increased emphasis on the second part of that mandate – the accessibility of arts to all Canadians. This new focus is not surprising given increased expectations around accountability for the use of public funds.

Although all of our funding programs consider the ways in which the general public interacts with the work created by artists in this province, two programs at the Saskatchewan Arts Board have a primary focus in this area:

• Artists in Communities (AiC)
• Artists in Schools (AiS) [1]

These two programs provide opportunities that enable community-based organizations and schools to offer arts-related activities that are linked to local (communities) and curricular (schools) objectives through partnerships with professional artists. These partnerships have traditionally been supported in the forms of projects and residencies.

Over the past couple of years, the Arts Board has been raising questions about the manner in which all of our grant programs function. In the fall/winter of 2017-18, we began an evaluation of

[1] In addition to the ongoing funding that the Arts Board receives from the Government of Saskatchewan through the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, both the AiC and AiS programs operate with the support of SaskCulture Inc. through the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation, and AiS also receives support from the Government of Saskatchewan through the Ministry of Education.

the AiC and AiS programs. Rather than simply working with our partners – the artists working in these projects or residencies, the community agencies and schools presenting the projects, and our funding partners in the presentation of these two programs – to review the ways in which the program was functioning well and where changes might be required, we chose to step back and investigate two primary questions:

- What are the circumstances that create the most successful collaborations between communities or schools and professional artists?

- How can a funder or a funding program work most effectively to encourage those circumstances in which successful collaborations occur?

As we grappled with these questions, Arts Board staff invited our partners and the community to attend a number of public meetings. These meetings were amazing – both helpful and challenging in equal degrees. People entered the room with a real willingness to play; that spirit was reflected in their outspokenness, in the respect they paid to other people's views and in their ability to build collaborative suggestions to address the challenges. The results of those meetings, and the recommendations for the AiC and AiS programs that grew out of those conversations and subsequent discussions between staff and program partners, are summarized in this document.

Michael Jones
CEO, Saskatchewan Arts Board

CURRENT AIC/AIS PROGRAMMING

The first artist-in-residence program began at the Arts Board in 1968 – exactly 50 years ago – at about the same time as the Arts Board was encouraging the creation of local arts festivals and the establishment of community arts councils. Responsibility for the residency program moved from the Arts Board to the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund, the Department of Culture and Recreation and the Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations (now SaskCulture) before returning to the Arts Board in 1992.

Upon the return of the program to the Arts Board, an independent consulting firm was hired to conduct the first review of the program. That review addressed a number of issues that still dictate the manner in which the AiC and AiS currently function, including:
- a clarification of program rationale and purposes,

- an identification of critical issues facing the program,

- details regarding the administration of the program and the roles and responsibilities of major stakeholders and

- a determination of the terms and conditions governing the program.

Leading up to this 2017-18 review, Artists in Schools programming has been divided into three distinct program streams:
- Artists in Schools – Projects: supports a project by a professional artist in a traditional classroom or school setting; funding is available for up to 75% of the project's total eligible expenses to a maximum of $10,000

- Artists in Schools – Residencies: supports schools to host an artist-in-residence project working in any art form to engage collaboratively in arts activities that are directly linked to educational outcomes; funding is available up to $35,000 for a ten-month residency (plus, for northern schools, an additional $1,500 to cover higher travel costs)

- Artists in Communities and Schools – Arts After Hours: responds to the need for out-of-school, community-based arts programming for children and youth, providing exploratory opportunities with professional artists not directly related to curriculum objectives; funding is available to a maximum of $10,000 (typically, but not necessarily, representing 75% of the project's eligible expenses)

Artists in Communities has also been divided into three streams:

- Artists in Communities – Projects: funds projects that allow community-based applicants to engage in the arts through performances, exhibitions, or workshops led by professional artists presented either as a series or as a single event and/or to work with an artist in the research and development of an artistic residency; funding is available to a maximum of $10,000

- Artists in Communities – Residencies: supports community organizations to host an artist-in-residence project by a professional artist, working in any art form, that involves significant community engagement components; funding is available up to $40,000 for a twelve-month residency (plus, for northern communities, an additional $1,500 to cover higher travel costs)

- Artists in Communities and Schools – Arts After Hours: responds to the need for out-of-school, community-based arts programming for children and youth, providing exploratory opportunities with professional artists not directly related to curriculum objectives; funding is available to a maximum of $10,000 (typically, but not necessarily, representing 75% of the project's eligible expenses)

Applications to these programs are submitted by the community organization or school that will be presenting the project or residency; that organization becomes the **lead applicant**. As part of the application, the lead applicant is asked to identify the participating artist. If the lead applicant is unable to identify the participating artist at the time of application, they are permitted to submit the application with a job posting designating the qualifications that they will seek in a **participating artist**. The lead applicant is also required, at the time of submission, to identify **community partners**, who will provide various types of support throughout the project period.

As with all Arts Board programs, applications are assessed by peer-based juries that includes community-engaged arts specialists, teachers and professional artists. Applications are assessed according to three criteria:
- artistic merit/quality,
- community impact (AiC) or educational merit (AiS) and
- planning.

"We were reviewing the years we had funding from the program and remembering the excitement that the artists had about coming to the community – and also how it impacted the artists. It was so gratifying to see people respond to our landscape and our community. So, whatever 'tinkering' has to be done, we can't lose sight of the fact that this is a program for artists and, as a result, communities benefit as well."

All quotations come from participants in the public consultation sessions.

REVIEW PROCESS

During September and October 2017, the Arts Board held a total of eight consultation meetings around the province:

September 13	North Battleford
September 19	Saskatoon
September 20	Stony Rapids
October 5	Regina
October 10	Eastend
October 12	Melfort
October 24	Fort Qu'Appelle
October 25	Saskatoon

In addition to these "face-to-face" consultations, the Arts Board hosted an online consultation on November 20, and Program Consultant Jay Kimball conducted a number of telephone and online interviews with regular program participants. These community meetings were facilitated by Kimball, who was assisted by Arts Board CEO Michael Jones and/or Program Consultant Noreen Neu.

The Arts Board remained committed to the following principles around review throughout the consultation sessions:

- Demonstrate that the Arts Board trusts and values the individuals and organizations who participate in our funded programs.

- The people who develop a program – the community organizations or schools and the participating artists – are in the best position to speak to their goals and to how they measure success.

- Encourage organizations to innovate, to take risks, and to change.

- Be fair and transparent with our processes.

- Remember that we are there to listen to – and not to lead – the conversation.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED RESPONSES

During the review process, we heard concerns that related both to the **environment** in which communities/schools and artists were trying to develop effective partnerships and to the ways in which the **funding program** was creating additional challenges for them. Those concerns revealed some consistent themes, and the Arts Board has focused our proposed responses around seven key areas.

1. Address program flexibility, points of access and contribution requirements.

2. Redefine the roles of the partners within the programs.

3. Simplify processes and reduce requirements around application and reporting.

4. Increase options regarding grant deadlines.

5. Continue to promote the values of inquiry, collaboration and strong partnerships.

6. Support the importance of good planning, sharing and evaluation.

7. Provide additional supports for applicants, including new types of physical resources and networking opportunities.

The proposed responses that follow have been divided into three timeframes for action:

- IMMEDIATE – change to be implemented if possible prior to the spring 2018 application deadline or, at minimum, with the move to online application processes during the 2018-19 program year

- MID-TERM – action to be considered over the coming years as staff resources are available to address this response

- UNDER CONSIDERATION – proposed response is reliant on the dedication of more financial resources to the programs and will be considered as funding becomes available

1. Address program flexibility, points of access and contribution requirements.

One of the common themes that we heard in community consultations was that applicants wanted more, and easier, points of access to the program. They wanted to be able to apply at different times of the year, but they also wanted a simpler program that would allow them to access small amounts of money on an ongoing basis – something that would allow them to plan larger activities or to meet and develop relationships with professional artists. Schools were also struggling with the requirement that they find 25% of the project budget through cash or in-kind support, which it was noted did not occur in the parallel AiC programs.

We found that some of the challenges with the current program resulted simply from a lack of promotion on the part of the Arts Board, as participants in the public consultations raised many questions about areas in which they felt the Arts Board programs were unclear. They felt that the application process could be confining – there was too much need to identify an expected outcome in the application, which the artist had to achieve even if it did not allow a project to develop organically through a process with community members or students. Professional artists were concerned that they were not receiving adequate time to pursue their own professional practice. While the current residency funding streams mandated that artists would have 50% of funded time for their own work, the needs of the community or school project often became all-encompassing, and that commitment was unfulfilled. The Arts Board did not intend any of these assumptions, and we felt we needed to reaffirm our commitment to the flexibility of AiC and AiS funding.

Proposed Responses
- While maintaining separate streams in each program for Projects and Residencies, launch a new micro-grant funding stream to both the AiC and AiS programs in the form of a Development grant. This small grant could be more responsive to emergent opportunities with simpler application requirements and monthly deadlines, and it could allow community organizations and schools to build relationships with potential

- artists, to present "experimental" introductory projects and to develop plans for longer-term projects or residencies. IMMEDIATE

- Over the long term, consider a funding program that would make successful AiS Projects available to schools that lacked the resources to develop their own initiatives. MID-TERM

- Raise the maximum funding request for residencies to $45,000 ($40,000 for AiS), although that would mean funding fewer projects should budget levels remain flatlined. IMMEDIATE

- For reasons of clarity, move the Arts After Hours stream entirely within the AiC program. IMMEDIATE

- Consider the implications of "folding" the Arts After Hours stream into the existing Artists in Communities – Projects funding stream. MID-TERM

- As additional funding for the program becomes available, consider awarding multi-year grants to successful longer-term residencies. UNDER CONSIDERATION

- To clarify program outcomes, move concert series, currently supported under the AiC program, back to the SaskFestivals funding program. IMMEDIATE

- The Arts Board needs to clarify expectations around the program, including options for flexibility around the project start and end dates and the expectation for the artist to divide their residency time 50/50 between the project and their independent artistic practice. IMMEDIATE

- The Arts Board needs to clarify expectations around changes that occur during a project period, affirming that funded projects should be responsive to revisions that respond to the developing needs of the project participants. IMMEDIATE

- Continue to accept applications submitted in French, which would be translated into English prior to review by the jury. When there is at least one application submitted in French, ensure that there is at least one juror who is able to read the application in its first language. IMMEDIATE

- Remove the requirement (currently only in the Artists in Communities and Schools – Arts After Hours, and Artists in Schools – Projects funding streams) for the applicant to supplement their grant with 25% of the budget contributed from other sources. IMMEDIATE

2. Redefine the roles of the partners within the program.

There was a great deal of conversation at the community consultations around the quality of partnerships. It was strongly felt that the most effective projects came out of strongest partnerships between the community organization or school and the professional artists – relationships that were genuine and where both partners plan and execute the project, respecting each other's roles.

Questions were also raised about the need for community partners. While people felt that genuine community partnerships could help raise the profile and long-term impact of a project, they felt that the need to identify such partnerships in the application could lead to disingenuous relationships that were built simply to respond to the Arts Board's requirement.

Proposed Responses
- Implement new definitions for the partners involved in applications as elaborated below.   IMMEDIATE

  Co-Applicant (community organization/school): This organization, with an identified contact person, was previously identified as the "lead applicant" on AiC/AiS applications, a role that will now be shared with the Co-Applicant (professional artist). This applicant will have shared responsibility for planning, development, execution and evaluation of the project. They will take part in drafting the application and all required reports and may have responsibility for management of the grant funds. The Co-Applicant (community organization/school) must be based in the province of Saskatchewan, may make a maximum of one application at any submission deadline, and must be in good standing with the Arts Board (ie. have no overdue reporting on any prior grants) when the application is received and any grant payments are issued.

  Co-Applicant (artist): This applicant must meet the Arts Board definition of professional artist.[2] This applicant will have shared responsibility for planning, development, execution and evaluation of the project. They will take part in drafting the application and all required reports and may have responsibility for management of the grant funds; the Arts Board is required to

issue a T4A form to any individual to whom grant funds are released directly. The Co-Applicant (artist) may make more than one application at any submission deadline, up to the maximum allowable funding level as through residencies, although the jury will consider the individual's ability to undertake multiple projects when assessing the applications. The Co-Applicant (artist) must be in good standing with the Arts Board (ie. have no overdue reporting on any prior grants) when the application is received and any grant payments are issued.

Community Partners (Potential): Community partners are no longer a prerequisite for applying to the AiC or AiS programs, although the presence of genuine partnerships appropriate to the activity and size of community will be one of the criteria used by the jury when assessing an application. The role of any Community Partners is defined by the Co-Applicants. Community Partners will not be required to take part in drafting the application, although letters of support from Community Partners may be included as support material to an application.

Elder or Knowledge Keeper Partners: It is necessary to include an Elder or Knowledge Keeper Partner for any application that involves any traditional Indigenous worldviews or art forms.[3] A letter of agreement from the Elder or Knowledge Keeper Partner is strongly encouraged as support material to an application.

- Continue working with "curatorial organizations," who act on behalf of communities, schools and artists to present projects; these applicants must explain their mandate and how they connect with the community/school and artist with whom they propose working.   IMMEDIATE

[2] A professional artist is defined as an individual who has completed training in a recognized art form (either through formal study or through a process of mentoring/apprenticeship), has produced a body of work in their artistic discipline that has received critical recognition, and who is recognized as professional by their peers within their arts community.
[3] Any application regarding activities that use or present Indigenous cultural material, traditional knowledge, or stories without the permission of the appropriate community will be considered ineligible by the Arts Board.

3. Simplify processes and reduce requirements around application and reporting.

As with all Arts Board program reviews, we heard that we should simplify application and reporting processes, removing "grant speak" and making the process easier for applicants to this program, many of whom do not work within the traditional arts funding world.

Proposed Responses
- Implement clear word count limits with move to online applications so that applicants have a clearer idea of how much they are required to write.   IMMEDIATE
- Simplify terms like "Applicant Legal Name" in the application process.   IMMEDIATE
- Include clear sections in the application for submissions from both Co-Applicants.   IMMEDIATE
- The budget template for the application should be updated and have improved functionality, and applicants must be able to provide sufficient detail regarding the breakdown of fees being paid to the artist.   IMMEDIATE
- Set reporting requirements that request only information required by the Arts Board in order to ensure due diligence in the use of public funds.   IMMEDIATE
- Create a less onerous reporting structure that prompts the applicants to submit items, like photo and video records of the activity, throughout the project term. Build automatic email reminders for the submission of this material into the online application system. This material could comprise a significant part of the final report, supplemented by short written reports from the Co-Applicants and a budget.   IMMEDIATE
- Create a structure in which the financial portion of a final report can be included in the same budget document as the initial application, so that applicants are reporting back on their initial budget projections.   IMMEDIATE
- Create a structure where materials submitted for reporting purposes could be returned to the Co-Applicants in a format, like Power Point, that would be conducive to public presentations regarding the success of the project.   MID-TERM

- Structure requirements so that reporting can be reflective and encourage planning for future activities.   IMMEDIATE

4. Increase options regarding grant deadlines.

There was a great deal of discussion about the Arts Board's current application deadlines. A number of consultation participants expressed challenges with the current deadlines and typical workflow (particularly for teachers), although there was never consensus in the room regarding what deadlines would be more effective. It was generally agreed, however, that moving to two deadlines annually for Project grant streams would allow greater flexibility for applicants to apply well in advance of their project start dates. This would allow them to secure funding before they needed to contract artists and advertise upcoming activities.

Proposed Responses
- Maintain two annual application deadlines: spring and fall (specific dates to be determined). Continue to consider Residency requests only at the spring deadline, but consider applications for project submissions, in both AiC and AiS as well as Arts After Hours, at both spring and fall deadlines. IMMEDIATE

- Consider moving the spring deadline earlier (April 1 instead of May 1) in order to facilitate a better planning cycle for summer activities; this challenge may be addressed, however, by accepting AiC Project and Arts After Hours applications at the fall deadline.   MID-TERM

- Set monthly deadlines for the new Development (micro-grant) funding stream in order to allow the funding to support emergent activities with minimal lead time.   IMMEDIATE

5. Continue to promote the values of inquiry, collaboration and strong partnerships.

The Arts Board heard strong support for a number of the current components of the AiC and AiS programs.

> **"Instead of thinking that you have to know all the outcomes, the process might be richer if you could just follow the process of the artist, be more inquiry-based, and come up with ideas together."**
>
> **"At the heart of an artist residency, the purpose of all of this is to animate artists in the community, not to support organizations. It's about getting artists into the communities, and the money should be going to support the artists as community animators."**
>
> **"In a community this size, [the people around you] are the people that you're going to spend your whole life with. Working together can only help build community."**

- People affirmed that "inquiry" needs to be at the core of all projects and residencies. It serves as an "anchor" and allows processes to be responsive to the needs of the community.

- Collaboration and learning continue to be seen as paramount in community-engaged arts practice.

- AiS partners want the Arts Board to continue promoting the cross-curricular and cross-cultural nature of the program. This funding program has allowed schools to create innovative ways of approaching subject matter across various areas of the curriculum.

- As noted in section 2 above, partnerships need to be promoted as mutually beneficial relationships that are necessary for these projects to achieve their outcomes. The Arts Board needs to assess applications to these programs according to the quality and depth of the proposed partnerships.

Proposed Responses
- Continue to require applicants to write an "inquiry statement," which places their project within a consideration of community or curricular needs.   IMMEDIATE

- Build an application form that requires equal contributions from both Co-Applicants in order that juries can assess the depth of partnership that has been established between the presenting organization or school and the professional artist. This application structure should require both Co-Applicants to articulate their goals for the project clearly.   IMMEDIATE

- Establish assessment criteria, to be considered by the jury in conjunction with other planning elements of the proposed project, that places value on the development of genuine community partnerships that are appropriate to the activity and the size of community.   IMMEDIATE

- Look for new ways to highlight existing online links (from the Arts Board website and, as possible, the application portal) to materials that can assist applicants as they develop deeper partnerships. Such materials could include items like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the Office of the Treaty Commission, Artology (the work being done at the University of Regina in relation to teacher/artist practice) and documentation regarding the benefits of cross-curricular instruction.   MID-TERM

- Model the value of successful collaboration in the relationships between the Arts Board, SaskCulture and the Ministry of Education.   IMMEDIATE

6. Support the importance of good planning, sharing and evaluation.

Evidence shows that projects and residencies that have well-planned objectives also have higher success rates. Although participants in the consultations affirmed this point of view, they also spoke to the importance of flexibility in planning to allow for developments through the course of an activity.

The Arts Board also heard frequently of the importance of telling stories of successful AiC and AiS initiatives, both to inspire the development of other activities and to affirm the value of professional artists working in collaboration with communities and schools.

Proposed Responses
- The Arts Board will require the partnership between the community organization or school and the professional artist to be in place prior to submission of any application. The application must provide opportunities for both Co-Applicants to articulate their goals for the proposed project.   IMMEDIATE

- Stories of successful AiC and AiS projects will continue to be featured by the Arts Board on our website, in our newsletter and in our annual report.   IMMEDIATE
- Encourage successful applicants to invite people – Arts Board staff, community stakeholders, MLAs and MPs, etc. – to any presentations that result from the project or residency.   IMMEDIATE

- Develop stronger language to articulate the importance of acknowledgement of the public funding for AiC and AiS projects.   IMMEDIATE

- Develop resource materials that can provide examples of different forms of documentation and evaluation, including such activities as sharing circles, blogs, vlogs, surveys and questionnaires.   MID-TERM

"It would be great if there could be some kind of bank – so that successful projects could be connected with other artists and communities."

"I like the idea of a conference. That would be a really kind of amazing situation to happen again in Saskatchewan – a networking conference connecting educators, artists, community members, facilitators..."

7. Provide additional supports for applicants, including new types of physical resources and networking opportunities.

The Arts Board needs to provide additional supports to applicants to help them design a successful project and submit a strong application. There are insufficient opportunities for community leaders and teachers, particularly those outside of major urban centres, to access professional artists. Without that access, people are unable to find the artists who could help them address their current needs or conceive creative responses to their current challenges. Once those relationships have been made, applicants need to see examples of successful Arts Board submissions; people at the consultation sessions suggested that it was "a lot of work" to create an application "in the dark" with minimal prospect for success.

Proposed Responses
- Create and disseminate a number of resources to help applicants craft stronger submissions. Such resources could include:
  - o   lists that direct community organizations and schools to existing resources where they can meet new artists and develop new partnerships;
  - o   samples of successful applications and final reports (redacted as necessary);
  - o   sample project budgets;
  - o   sample letters of support from Elder or Knowledge Keeper Partner;
  - o   sample contracts or memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between community organization or school and professional artist;
  - o   "how to" handbooks on program development, possibly developed from the model of existing ArtsSmarts resources;
  - o   "how to" handbooks regarding submitting an application;
  - o   more in depth FAQs and
  - o   video content regarding community engagement and arts and learning activities.   MID-TERM

- Present a community engagement conference on a biennial basis, that could provide professional development opportunities for professional artists, community leaders and/or teachers in addition to networking opportunities to encourage new partnerships between community organizations or schools and artists.   UNDER CONSIDERATION

- Begin work with stakeholders to address provincial and regional gaps in communication and knowledge about Arts Board programs and communities. Networking opportunities could be developed with existing cultural organizations (Common Weal Community Arts, Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils, Sâkêwêwak Artists' Collective, SaskCulture, discipline-specific service organizations like the Saskatchewan Registered Music Teachers' Association or the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild) as well as school divisions and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation in order to create a stronger network for this activity and to select community presentations at which these programs could be better promoted.   MID-TERM

NEXT STEPS

Through 2018, the Arts Board is implementing a new online application system for all of our programs. This will impact the roll-out of some of the proposed responses in this document. Our current timetable for activity is as follows:

mid-March 2018	release revised application forms (paper-based) for May 1, 2018 application deadline
May 1, 2018	application deadline (all AiC funding streams and AiS Residencies)
summer 2018	release details for new Development (micro-grant) funding streams in both AiC and AiS
October 1, 2018	tentative first deadline (monthly) for Development stream funding – all submissions through online system
November 15, 2018	application deadline (AiC and AiS Project streams) – all submissions through online submission and first attempt at a fall deadline for AiC Project funding
spring 2018	specific date to be determined for application deadline (all AiC and AiS funding streams including AiS Projects)